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State Dept & DIA review completed

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
10 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

A. 56

MORI C05480647

MIDDLE EAST

Situation Report Number 18
(as of 0630 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

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GENERAL

1. The war enters the fifth day showing no promise of a short decisive campaign for either side. The evening passed quietly on both fronts with Israeli air attacks starting at daybreak. No concurrent ground action has been detected on either front.

2. The Egyptians have established their force firmly on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, forcing an Israeli admission that their ground forces have been unable to push them back. In the Golan Heights, despite heavy fighting, the Israelis have been unable to push the Syrians back beyond the 1967 cease-fire line, and they admit that they have not broken the Syrian army. The ground is still contested, however, and no clear-cut advantage is evident for either side.

EGYPTIAN FRONT

3. The Israeli air force this morning renewed its attacks on Egyptian positions on the west bank of the Canal and on the bridges crossing the Canal. According to Israeli press accounts, there has been little activity along the canal over the evening. The Egyptians continued to resupply their forces over

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[REDACTED]

the night without opposition from air attack. Despite losses taken during the air attacks of the last few days, the Egyptians evidently are able to keep their bridges in operation and their forces supplied.

4. With yesterday's admission that their ground forces were unable to destroy the Egyptian forces on the eastern bank, the Israelis are counting on their air force to hold the line. For the last two days, the Israelis have concentrated their air attacks along the canal in the face of heavy anti-aircraft fire--guns and surface-to-air missiles--covering the bridgeheads. The Israelis reportedly lost seven fighters during these attacks. By late yesterday some success may have been achieved in suppressing these defenses, [REDACTED]

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5. The Egyptians now hold the entire east bank of the canal with their positions extending into the Sinai from depths of 3 to 5 kilometers to perhaps as much as 20 kilometers. An Egyptian incursion yesterday reached the Mitla Pass but, according to the Israelis, was driven off by air attacks. The Israelis claim to have stabilized the lines and to be establishing defensive positions in front of the Egyptian forces. They claim to be building up their forces behind these lines for what Israel acknowledges will be a longer war than initially it expected. The earlier confidence of a short and decisive counter-stroke has faded and the Israelis are facing up to Egyptian forces that are more capable than they had envisaged.

6. Although the military situation is still far from settled, some Israeli newspapers are calling for the destruction of Syrian and Egyptian military capability to prevent future Arab attacks. A columnist with Haaretz, an authoritative Tel Aviv daily, however, points out the dilemma for Israel if it should carry out such a policy. The columnist argues that a resounding defeat would make it almost impossible for Arab governments to enter into negotiations with

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Israel. He said that a military victory could serve as a political instrument if military aims were accompanied by political aims. He notes, however, that the Israeli Government has made it clear that it has no political aims in this war and concludes that the main fruit of the struggle is also likely to be a military victory.

SYRIAN FRONT

7. As the fighting entered its fifth day the situation on the Golan Heights remains stable after a quiet night. There are conflicting reports from both Syria and Israel concerning the positions they hold, with both sides claiming to hold the cease-fire line. Syrian forces still retain possession of Qunaytirah despite Israeli attempts to retake it.

8. Radio Jerusalem reports that early this morning the IAF began conducting heavy air strikes against Syrian armored forces in the Heights.

On the ground, fighting this morning seems to be limited to minor skirmishes.

10. The Syrians have published a list of those injured in yesterday's attack on the Soviet cultural mission in Damascus. No Russian names figure in the list, and Syrian officials refuse to confirm or deny that 30 Soviets were killed in the raid. The wreckage of the building has not been completely cleared, however, and further bodies may be discovered. According to press reports, the Syrian director of the mission was badly injured and a number of Syrian students were

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wounded. Other press cables from Damascus report that the oil refineries at Hims were severely damaged by Israeli air strikes and that three Israeli aircraft were lost in the attack.

25X1 JORDAN

13. The German and French missions in Amman have told a US Embassy officer that they see no indications of an imminent Jordanian entry into the war, but they

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confirm that pressures are mounting. The Germans believe arm twisting from Sadat and Asad could turn the tide. The French see increasing agitation from Palestinians in Jordan as the key factor.

SAUDI ARABIA

14. According to a sensitive State Department cable from Amman, Saudi Arabia has advised Jordan that it intends to send a brigade of troops to Syria through Jordanian territory. Jordan intends to comply and a Saudi delegation in Amman is discussing with Jordanian officials the possibility of Jordanian logistical support, including fuel for its troops. The embassy comments that should the Saudis enter the war, the Jordanians could find it difficult to stay out.

LEBANON

15. The Israeli Air Force has increased the number of sorties flown over Lebanon with the latest flights made this morning over the central and southern part of the country. Yesterday a Lebanese radar station was reported to have been destroyed by Israeli aircraft. The Lebanese complained to UN observers yesterday that an Israeli force of 40 men and six halftracks had entered Lebanon and searched civilians. The Israelis, probably in search of fedayeen, apparently did not find any and withdrew after four hours. The Israelis have come under rocket attacks from the estimated 5,000 Palestinian guerrillas in southern Lebanon, but thus far no Israeli casualties have been reported. The fedayeen in general appear to be awaiting developments before committing themselves to the fighting.

given Israel's military strength and the disunity of the fedayeen, they are pessimistic about the usefulness of their forces.

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17.

Soviet Ambassador Vinogradov told Al Ahram editor Haykal that the Soviets would deliver whatever was necessary to resupply Egyptian forces which, Vinogradov said were deserving because of the way they were fighting.

18. Three Soviet surface combatants are preparing to enter the Bosphorus en route to the Mediterranean; they should arrive sometime today. Two are believed to be missile destroyers, and the third is reported to be a Sverdlov-class cruiser. They probably will join elements of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron that are now trailing the US Task Force now operating near Cyprus.

OTHER ARAB STATES

19. The mobilization of Algerian military units is continuing. An unknown number of troops and vehicles, including engineer elements, have been transferred to Egypt by AN-12 transports. At least 15 Algerian MIG aircraft have been sent to Uqba bin Nari air base (formerly Wheelus) in Libya. The Algerian Navy is continuing to recall personnel and some naval units reportedly will be deployed to Libyan waters.

20. In Abu Dhabi the American Embassy reports it was warned in an Arabic language telephone call that the chancery would be bombed. Local employees were sent home and police protection was expected momentarily.

LATE ITEM

21. Saudi officials are increasingly concerned that they may soon have to take a strong anti-American stand in order to survive politically. The Saudis feel they have no other direction to go and also believe the regime is vulnerable as will be the US if it resupplies Israel with arms.

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